

to our shores, or ancient philosophy or present day materialistic science. All who cast themselves upon bounty derived from these sources end in want.

The so-called "Prodigal Son" found nothing satisfying in the far off land. Man has somewhat of the Infinite in him and naught but the Infinite will satisfy him. Art will not satisfy the hungry man, nor music the man that is athirst. Paper dolls will not satisfy natural affections nor will Dante, Milton, Browning, Tennyson satisfy man's cravings for the Infinite. Only the word of God will satisfy the soul's hunger. Our age has tried and is yet trying to satisfy spiritual desires with other things than the word of God but the characteristic restlessness of our age is proof strong enough that men are not finding the things that satisfy. Ours is an age of education, but intelligence alone can not explain the spiritual mysteries of the universe. The education of to-day can no more feed man's spiritual nature and quicken its growth, than can agates and pearls supply the roots of the tree with the needed nourishment. Our systems of education, excellent in many respects must needs be baptized in the Spirit and be warmed by the love of Jesus Christ before they will contribute to the spiritual growth of the individual and society.

Despite all that may be said to the contrary, the Bible is literature. It differs in kind, however, from all other literature. Inspiration can not be attributed to Dante, or Browning or Tennyson as it is applied to David or Isaiah or St. Paul. As literature, the Bible is unique. You may search the world's literature and will find no book and no collection of books that throw such light on the moral and spiritual life as the Bible. But all literature, the Bible included is an expression and an embodiment of life. There can not be a great literature before there has been a great life. To the writing of a great poem something more is necessary than a great poet; there must be a great life behind the poet and a great experience under him. Great books are books of life, transcriptions, as it were, from the souls of the authors and they live because there is life in them. The Bible too is a book that has a great life back of it and a great experience under its several authors. God comes down into the world and broods over the hearts of men, gives them a clearer vision than they would otherwise have had, gives them a firmer hold on life, a larger faith, a more inspiring hope, a more patient and comprehensive love. In this way we believe that God has revealed and is yet revealing himself to men. The Bible is therefore a product of the human and the divine. We do not believe in verbal inspiration, because it is not inspiration at all. Man is not God's phonograph. Verbal inspiration makes men machines not prophets. It is wholly opposed to God's way of treating human capacities. Back of the various authors of the Bible was the religious life of his own people and under him

a great experience as a child of God. What these men wrote is what they actually experienced, not what they saw or imagined. This conception gives a value to the scripture that it would not otherwise have. So when David writes, "Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear him,"—and when John writes, "God is love," they are not writing the products of their own imagination, they are telling what has been revealed to them thru their own experience—what they have actually and truly felt.

There is nothing that gives life except life "*Omne vivum e vivo*." That which makes literature valuable is its power to reproduce the life, of which it is the expression, in the reader. Great writers and teachers alike are life givers. All education is based upon this fact. No man can be self educated. Lazarus can not say to himself, arise, a Christ standing without must say the word.

It is said that no student of Rugby ever went away without carrying somewhat of Dr. Arnold with him. His was a great life and it tended to reproduce itself in all those that came in contact with him. That person is to be pitied that can not say there is somewhat of Arnold, or Milton, or Dickens, or Browning in me.

In some such way I conceive the Bible to contribute to the deepening of the spiritual life. It is the basis of the Christian religion, the very life of the Protestant church, and the spiritual life of the world. But it is wholly valueless so long as it remains without us. The scriptures must get into us before the life expressed in them can fill us. What the word of God does for us it does by dwelling within us. It is the sword of the Spirit but it is only as we are filled with the Word that the spirit has something to work with. It is a lamp unto our pathway, but it is only as we are filled with the Word that the spirit has something to illumine our way with. The Bible must become *incarnate* in our lives. It sustains and deepens life because it is life itself. One verse of the Bible incarnate in the life develops that life more than all the schools of thought and the rituals for a generation. In the Bible even as literature exists the greatest spiritual force available to man. There is behind it a deep, rich life and back of each author a great experience. It is this quality of life, the vitality that pulses thru the scripture and makes it refulgent with force, and it has the faculty of imparting this force to our own lives. The spirit of the Bible is the youthful spirit, and by its indwelling our lives are kept fresh and youthful. The Bible is surcharged, yea it is the custodian of the ideal and thru its reading our ideals are restored, and refreshed. The Bible is the great interpreter of life's meaning and duty and thru its study we come to just appreciations of our place and mission in the world.

I would urge a companionship with the Bible—with its authors who have the power that comes from the richest, deepest life,

who have the highest conceptions of life and its end, that these may be reproduced in us, that we may be brought out of the monotony of life and the bondage of fact into the larger liberty of the truth, and into the greater world of influence and power that alone can inspire and elevate and deepen the life of drudgery and toil.

W. D. FURRY.

F. B. Meyer of England has said that a Christians growth in grace can be measured by the growth of their love for private Bible study.

The word bears such a vital relation to the Christian life that growth or decline may be measured by love or neglect of the word.

The Bible will be to us just what we allow it to be. For the Christian it will be

1. A means of guidance. The world-standard of morality has been inherited and endorses many things which are wrong. But the perceptive moral teaching of the Bible may be followed with implicit confidence. The life of Jesus as revealed in the word is the most perfect the world has ever conceived. We shall never get beyond it. It is the light of the world.

2. The Bible will also give moral motive power to the life. Here all other religions and philosophies fail. They can point to the beautiful and the true but they cannot move the sinful hearts of men to accept the good.

But the Bible is a two-edged sword. It smites with conviction of sin, and having smitten it binds up the wound with salvation.

No other book has such power to transform the lives of its readers. A Christian's intention may be to hold out faithful but if he neglect the word he will find his intention gradually growing weaker until he gives up the race.

3. The Bible gives strength to the will. "Thy words have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee."

Jesus was thoroughly armed with the word and in the wilderness put temptation to flight with three shafts from that well-filled quiver.

Are you weak friend, and in spite of your good resolves do you often fall? Then feed more often on "the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby." Are you strong? Then learn from it the hard things which you are called to do. It will lead you "from strength to strength."

In relation to the work of the church the Bible is equally important.

1. It furnishes the outlines of theology which guide the teaching of the church. Not all there is to know about God is revealed in his word for there are heights and depths to his love which are for future ages to discover, but the great fundamental truths were grasped by the "holy men of old" who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" and we do well to take heed to their